

## **THE JACOBS REPORT**

**GILDA Z. JACOBS**  
**MICHIGAN SENATE**  
Assistant Democratic Floor Leader  
FOURTEENTH DISTRICT

**For Immediate Release**  
**March 10, 2006**

**Contact: Matt Levin**  
**(517) 373-7888**

---

### **SENATE TO OFFER ITS OWN CURRICULUM**

#### **Foreign Language in Mix; Flexibility for Algebra II**

Having completed public hearings on the subject, Senator Wayne Kuipers (R-Holland) has opted to introduce his own high school curriculum proposal, one he hopes to report to the full Senate next week.

Sen. Kuipers, Chair of the Senate Committee on Education, is apparently aiming for a compromise between the House version of the curriculum bill that was passed last week and the original proposal issued by the State Board of Education.

According to staff, a foreign language requirement will be retained, and flexibilities designed to cope with Algebra II will be incorporated. Students would be allowed to spread the Algebra II requirement over two years with full credit, or revisit the subject in senior year for full credit. A career tech program would also be available after sophomore year.

The bill should be on schedule to clear the Senate by the end of March, sticking to the timeline set by Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema (R-Wyoming), who said earlier this year he wanted the curriculum proposal through the Senate before the beginning of April.

The Senate Education committee held nine hearings on the curriculum proposal across the state, finishing on Tuesday. In the public hearings on the curriculum, the committee heard from 229 people.

### **SURPRISE: SENATE VOTES TO INCREASE MINIMUM WAGE**

#### **Proposal is More Generous than Ballot Initiative**

Within warning, the Michigan Senate today unanimously voted to increase the state's \$5.15-an-hour minimum wage to \$7.40 by 2008.

The first of the phased-in increases would take the wage to \$6.95 in October. It would then increase to \$7.15 on July 1, 2007 and to \$7.40 on July 1, 2008.

The minimum wage has not been increased in nine years.

Floor debate was limited by strategic Republican parliamentary maneuvers. Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema, R-Wyoming, set the stage for passage when he announced his support, saying there are pluses and minuses.

"But all in all, I think it's the right thing to do at the right time," he said.

It's unclear what impact the action will have on a union-backed petition drive now under way to raise the minimum wage by amending the Michigan Constitution. The Senate-passed bill doesn't have a constitutional component; however, its increases are larger. The bill now heads to the House for consideration.

### **LIFELINE DISCOUNTS ON BASIC LOCAL TELEPHONE SERVICE**

## **MPSC Offers Assistance to Low-income Customers**

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) noted that more people are now eligible for the Lifeline program that provides discounts on basic local telephone service to low-income landline telephone customers, due to changes in the Michigan Telecommunications Act. To highlight the program's expanded eligibility, Governor Jennifer M. Granholm has declared March 5 through March 11 "Lifeline Week" in Michigan.

"More people than ever are now eligible to get monthly discounts on their telephone bills," said MPSC Commissioner Monica Martinez. "With telephone service considered a necessity for daily modern life, the Lifeline discount is good news for low-income telephone customers who are managing tight budgets."

To qualify for Lifeline, the customer's household income must be at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, or the customer must participate in one of the following assistance programs: Medicaid; food stamps, supplemental security income (SSI); federal public housing assistance (Section 8); the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); the national school free lunch program; or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Eligible customers should contact their local telephone provider to apply.

The MPSC issued a new "Consumer Alert" that includes income guidelines and other details about the Lifeline program, as well as the federal Link-Up program that reduces phone service installation charges. It is available on the MPSC's Web site – [michigan.gov/mpsc](http://michigan.gov/mpsc) – or by calling 1-800-292-9555.

The MPSC is an agency within the Department of Labor & Economic Growth.

## **CORRECTION FROM PREVIOUS ISSUE**

### **Michigan Federation of Teachers Won Court Ruling**

The February 17 edition of the Jacobs Report detailed that the Michigan Education Association (MEA) won a federal court ruling requiring districts to recall the erroneous teacher criminal background lists. It was actually the Michigan Federation of Teachers (MFT) who won the ruling, not the MEA.

---

All Michigan legislation can be tracked at <http://www.legislature.michigan.gov/>.

If you'd like to be removed from this distribution list, simply reply to this e-mail with "remove" in the subject header.

State Senator Gilda Jacobs represents the 14<sup>th</sup> Senate District, which includes Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Franklin, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak Township, Southfield, and Southfield Township. She is the Minority Vice Chair of the Families & Human Services Committee and the Economic Development, Small Business & Regulatory Reform Committee. She also serves on the Government Operations and Health Policy Committees.

Constituents of the 14<sup>th</sup> District may contact Senator Jacobs at [sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov) or toll-free at 1-888-937-4453.

This newsletter is produced in single-space form in order to save paper and transmission costs.

####

Matthew J. Levin  
Legislative Director  
Senator Gilda Z. Jacobs

P.O. Box 30036  
Lansing, MI 48909-7536  
(517) 373-7888  
[mlevin@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:mlevin@senate.michigan.gov)